THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) Increase in frequency of Chennai Rajdhani Express from bi-weekly to six days a week is neither feasible due to operational and resource constraints nor is commercially viable as the train is not fully patronised. Speeding up of trains including Chennai Rajdhani is an on-going process. With effect from 15.8.1998 Chennai Rajdhani Express has been speeded up by one hour. Further, speeding up of Chennai Rajdhani is not feasible at present.

Project for a new rail line in Himachal Pradesh

2314. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some project for new rail line from Bhanupalli on the Sirhind-Ropar-Nangal Dam line upto Rampur via Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh has been approved by the Ministry, on the Konkan Railway Corporation pattern;

(b) if so, total cost of project, progress made as on 15th November, 1998, with estimated amount spent so far;

(c) target fixed to complete the project;

(d) by when the project is likely to be completed;

(e) whether the Ministry propose to launch similar projects in Himachal Pradesh to explore new passenger and freight revenues sources; and

(e) if so, the details thereof; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir. However, the construction of a new rail line from Bhanupalli-Bilaspur-Beri is proposed to be taken up through Satlj Valley Railway Corporation which is being set up as a Joint Venture by Himachal Pradesh Govt. with participation by the Cement Manufacturers and IRCON (Indian Railway Construction Company) on behalf of the Railway. The date of taking up the project is not yet known to this Ministry since the Joint Venture is being co-ordinated by the Govt. of Himachal Pradesh.

(b) The anticipated cost of the project is Rs. 400 crs. as per the survey report of 1996 and would now be about Rs. 500 crores at current day prices.

(c) and (d) No target date has been fixed.

(e) and (f) There is no proposal for launching any similar projects at present due to resource constraints.

Problems of 60 Days Advance Reservation

2315. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the problems of reservation have increased after the decision of giving reservation facilities for 60 days advance period as the tickets are not available on very first day of reservation; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the agents are blocking and blacking the tickets; if so, the steps taken to improve the reservation system?